THE New Republic

A Profile of Harold Gibbons—Hoffa's Left Hand

Pages 8-9

Wordsworth by Cable

By ROBERT GRAVES

The Hurdles of Satire . . . . . *Philip Roth*

Bernstein's New Musical . . . . . *Robert Evett*

That Uncertain Feeling . . . . . *Michael Millgate*

HOW SUCCESSFUL IS OUR DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

A Communication from H. A. R. Philby

SEPTEMBER 9, 1957

25 cents

TENNESSEE STATE COLLEGE
HINSON CITY, TENNESSEE

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Washington Wire

The Age of More

THIS REPORTER has been travelling in Canada. America's free enterprise dollar is at a current 6 cent discount here. And there are other differences. For example, Canada has a Cabinet Minister of Fine Arts; like most other civilized nations (save the US) it feels government has a big, direct responsibility for all sorts of cultural matters. Total Canadian population is less than New York City and Los Angeles combined, but the Dominion devotes $100 million to its Fine Arts ministry. Every other big nation in the world (save ours) feels a direct financial responsibility to foster and preserve artistic and cultural values. Not us. Not unless there's a depression —and a Franklin D. Roosevelt. Sometimes, friends, it almost seems that it is we—not the rest of the world—who are peculiar.

Is this too unappreciative? Perhaps we are, and instead we should give thanks for living in The Age of More. More billboards on the highways, more employed, more cars, more TV sets, more books, more balanced diets, more college graduates, more union members and pension plans, more church-goers. We really ought to be satisfied. But we're not.

We've always respected Norman Thomas; he says the Congress that has just gone home is one of the "least satisfactory" he can remember. Ike is "disappointed" in it too. Maybe it didn't do much good, but it didn't do much harm. And anyway, we can't get very mad at politicians. The public hired them and can fire them if it wants. The other day we were talking to two fine, young liberal Democrats in the House. We asked them if they thought the country deserved this Congress. They said they thought the public deserved something worse. Well, Bernard Shaw wrote in *The New Republic* some years back that "American adults are hopeless; but they mean well; and it would be a pity to shoot them."

Now Ike can go off to Newport. And he doesn't have to worry about Asiatic flu. There's a story behind that. After the President told his press conference he would be inoculated when the flu vaccine was available for "ordinary people like I am," the correspondents began badgering White House secretary Jim Hagerty, trying to find out "why" and "when." They didn't have to wait very long.

One day Doc Snyder phoned the Surgeon General to say: "I think the President should be vaccinated, what do you think?" Surgeon General Burney agreed and reminded Snyder he had already said publicly that heart patients were especially susceptible. Snyder begged him to say it again so it could impress Ike, and so Burney issued a statement to the press repeating himself. But Ike didn't see the newspapers that day, so he missed it. Hagerty then called in some of the press boys and explained that the staff had had to trick the President into having his flu shot by telling him he had already been exposed to danger. But Hagerty didn't say whether they later told Ike that the shot wouldn't have done him any good if he had been exposed: the vaccine is preventive only if it's taken at least seven days before exposure.

Ike Going Both Ways

WE'VE never been able to figure out whether Ike wants to sound like the Best Boy Scout, or whether his staff makes it appear that way. Why shouldn't the President be the first to be vaccinated? Ike was in the Army long enough to know that Rank Has Its Privileges. He didn't apologize for taking them then. Why now? And we're never sure, also, whether Ike has a bad memory or a convenient one. Remember how he was all for TVA; but his appointee to the TVA board isn't enthusiastic about it.

He wants to pick the best men available for our Ambassadors overseas; and then he names an Ambassador to Ceylon who knows nothing about Ceylon but whose "business career was examined; the FBI reports on him were good." He invites Congress to cut the budget, and when it does, he complains. He says he has "never accepted [a gift] from a corporation," but the Gettysburg farm is full of them (what about the golf cart from Sears?). On August 15, he was sure he "would have to" call Congress back in session if it didn't give him the money for foreign aid he wanted, and the next week he said flatly he wouldn't call a special session of Congress.

Reminder to the Teamsters

THE TEAMSTERS UNION can't say it wasn't warned. While its Executive Board was meeting in San Francisco with Dave Beck and Jimmy Hoffa last week to decide what to do next, the AFL-CIO Ethical Practices Committee in Washington announced it was adding Hoffa's name to the list of Teamsters officers it charges are a "corrupt influence" in the union. Beck and two other officers were cited as corrupt influences by the federation last May. This new "supplementary report" was handed to the Executive Board during its strategy huddle to let the Teamsters know that if they elect Hoffa president at their September 30th convention, the union can't expect to stay in the federation. Hoffa wants very much to stay in. Most of the AFL-CIO leaders we've talked to also want the Teamsters to stay in—if they will clean up. But from what came out in the McClellan hearings, we got the impression that asking Hoffa to do the cleaning up is like asking a prisoner to guard the gates. Our guess is that the Teamsters will go ahead and elect Hoffa anyway, and that when the AFL-CIO convention meets next December it will decide to throw the Teamsters out.

T.R.B.

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The New Republic

A JOURNAL OF OPINION

SEPTEMBER 9, 1957

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Correspondence

► *A Chink in the Armor*

SIRS:

THE MOST DISTURBING thing about Janet Winn's movie reviews is a sneaking suspicion in the mind of the reader that, behind their clever and spirited surface, lurks an author of wide and sound knowledge, genuine aesthetic susceptibility, and humane and catholic judgment. It is hard to tell about this, because Miss Winn is quite determinedly On the Side of the Angels, and her prose judgments come to us wearing The Whole Armor of God. Her standards seem *so* high.

In a situation like this, every chink in the Armor counts. It is, therefore, with a real sense of relief that I find in her otherwise ironclad review of *The Birth of a Nation* (*NR*, 2 September 1957) the interesting statement that the Emancipation Proclamation was signed before the outbreak of the Civil War. One can never be sure, however. It is, after all,

(*Continued on page 23*)

No Room

IT SHOULD not pass without comment that another Congress has adjourned without doing anything about the nation's school shortage. That isn't because Congress wasn't told that when all our schoolrooms —including those in the rickety firetraps—are filled to capacity there are 2.3 million children for whom there is no adequate space; that in the next five years there will be six million more children of school age to crowd into these already overflowing buildings; nor that half a million more schoolrooms are needed to hold them.

The House of Representatives had these facts before it when it voted on July 25 (208-203) to kill a bill authorizing grants of $1.5 billion to the states which would have helped build approximately 33,000 more classrooms in the next four years.

There were all the usual excuses. This country (with its national output of $425 billion a year) can't afford such spending; the federal government has no business financing education (that is community business, and besides it would lead to federal control); the funds wouldn't be needed if schools were consolidated and the "frills" eliminated. Some, taking the line laid down by the US Chamber of Commerce, argued that the classroom shortage is only a statistical illusion.

Two emotions which were at work underneath the surface of debate were stronger than logic or facts. One was the fear of Southern Democrats that federal school aid would somehow be used to force desegregation (if not by a "Powell Amendment" denying funds to school districts which segregate, then by administrative withholding or otherwise). As important was the desire among many members of both parties to avoid offending large taxpayers who oppose federal school aid on the ground that it will lead to higher federal taxes for them. They prefer that any added funds come out of state and local taxes of the sales tax variety, not based, as the federal income tax is, on ability to pay. A Census Bureau report released last week shows that more than 52 percent of all state taxes last year were collected from sales taxes; and more than ¾ of local taxes come from property or sales taxes. The study shows too that the proportion of sales to other state taxes is steadily increasing.

It is easy, therefore, to understand the preference of large taxpayers for financing by state and local rather than federal taxes, but to understand is not, in this instance, either to forgive or excuse. For the need for new schools is greatest in communities where there is the least taxable wealth. Twelve of our richest states are building 45 percent of the new schools currently under construction, although they have less than ¼ of the classroom shortage. The poorest 12 states, with 35 percent of the shortage, only have funds to finance 16 percent of the new schools going up. It isn't that the poorer states are making too little effort, either: 10 of these 12 states

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are spending more than the national average on education. Local school districts, struggling to keep up with the shifts and growths in school population are beyond their depth in all parts of the country. Nationally, school districts have increased their debt from $1.3 billion to $8 billion since 1956. Many have reached their legal debt limit.

There was no reason when the Congress met to expect that opposition to federal aid to education had dimmed and the school bill would coast through. What was thought to be new was the President's firm determination that a school bill should pass this year. He sternly demanded it in a special message last January. But his determination gradually weakened. (Was it under the influence of some of his tax-conscious golf companions?) Finally, "he equivocated so much that he seemed to be saying to the members of his own party that they should not look to him for advice," *The Nation's Schools* for September reports. "The prevailing attitude in Washington," the article goes on, "is that President Eisenhower is primarily responsible for the defeat of the legislation." Education Secretary Marion Folsom, who never wavered in support of the bill, seemed to say as much when he frankly apologized to those who had cooperated with him for the President's failure to back them up.

Labor in the South

SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY has seldom been extended to labor organizers. But as unions have persisted in their effort to organize, this inhospitality has taken forms which are more than rude: they are probably unconstitutional. In a survey of the South they have just completed Benjamin D. Segal, trade union consultant for the Fund for the Republic, and his collaborator Joyce L. Kornbluh have collected some striking evidence.

Last month South Carolina's General Assembly approved six ordinances which require in identical wording

> . . . a permit in writing . . . before any person shall solicit membership for any organization, union, or society or of any sort which requires from its members the payment of membership fees, dues, or is entitled to make assessments. . . .

The cost of organizing is high in Baxley, Georgia, which exacts a $2,000 annual license fee from unions and $500 for "each member signed up." In nearby Carrollton, which requires payment by any organizer of $100 per day, the International Union of Electrical Workers figured it would cost $37,000 a year to keep one man at work in the town.

But Osceola, Arkansas (population 2573) gets the brass ring. For its City Council has enacted an ordinance which demands $1,000 a day from unions "for the privilege of doing business."

The New Irresponsibles

ONCE upon a time the Democrats could lay claim to title as the party of internationalism; they could, and did, point to the Republicans as prisoners of an isolationist wing. Yet in the recent Congressional emasculation of the foreign aid program, the Democrats behaved so irresponsibly that we wonder whether they have not forfeited the title for years to come.

The Senate Democratic leadership did not overexert itself on behalf of the aid bill, but it was the House Democrats who did the real damage—damage only partly undone by the last-minute House-Senate conference. Not one Democratic House leader spoke in support of the aid program during the seven hours of debate which preceded the crucial House vote on August 15. True, unprecedented pressure from the White House persuaded barely half of the House Republicans to respect the President's wishes on the matter when the House, by a lopsided 254 to 129 vote, took away $809 million more from the already cut appropriation ($244 million of this was restored in conference, but the final total was still a billion below the President's original request). The surprise in the House—which behaved, as one defender of the aid program observed, "with the temper of an unruly mob"—was the wholesale defection of Democrats from all sections of the country

It is not news that Southerners, reflecting the protection-mindedness of a newly industrialized region, can no longer be counted on for internationalist votes. In this instance, however, Southerners were joined by 54 Northern Democrats plus another 23 from Western and border states. Many wished to establish an "economy" record; others were voting in exasperation over White House vacillation. The most charitable explanation is that many Democrats are honestly worried about looseness of financial accountability in administration of the aid program. Thus, they argued, there is sufficient aid already

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in the "pipeline," overlooking the fact that current budget requests took into account all aid on the way.

More than half of the cuts approved by nearly all of the House Democrats affect precisely those items in the program which cost the least but, in our view, matter the most. The amount of military aid is open to debate, but the House instead gutted economic development funds. The President's request for a $2 billion capital fund for a three-year period had been cut earlier to $500 million for the first year and an additional $625 million a year later, subject to approval then. When the House voted to cut still another $200 million from the first-year authorization (*not* restored in conference), it remained for a Republican, Walter Judd of Minnesota, to plead that the fund officers "cannot make any loans intelligently unless they have a long-range program with assurance of adequate funds." And at the same time that Judd, who has been known primarily as a defender of Chiang Kai-shek, was constructively championing long-range assistance to less developed nations, northern and western Democrats were voting to cut $26.9 million from the assistance program established by Truman.

Wisconsin—At Long Last

"MODERN" Republicans cannot win. That is the cry of the Old Guard in Wisconsin, the faction whose indifference was a major factor in the defeat of former Gov. Walter Kohler, a staunch supporter of President Eisenhower, in the state's special election of a successor to the late and unmodern Senator McCarthy.

But there were other reasons for thrice-defeated William Proxmire's victory over one of the GOP's most reliable vote-getters. There was the protest against Administration farm, economic, fiscal and foreign policies. There was the important fact of Proxmire's six long years of bulldog campaigning in the face of hopeless odds; there was also effective use of labor support and, as in Michigan, years of dedicated, unpublicized organizing work by young Democrats. But it is the fact that backers of former Rep. Glenn Davis, whom Kohler defeated in the July 30 primary, lay down on the job election day which will be most talked about. In counties McCarthy carried 3-to-1 in 1954, only 37 percent of those who had voted in 1956 bothered to go to the polls. The seven staunchest Democratic counties had a 55 percent turnout.

The state GOP seems headed for the bitterest kind of internecine warfare. Already the conservative-isolationist supporters of Davis have called for the scalp of pro-Kohler state Republican officers. The Taft-McCarthy faction, out of power since 1952, will drive for control.

It seems likely the Proxmire landslide will stimulate the same kind of bickering among Republicans in other states—which Democrats in Washington are hoping.

Intercontinental Missiles

THE REPORT of the successful testing of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by the Russians is probably reliable, since the Russians have not, so far as we know, lied in the recent past about military or technical accomplishments. But it should be noted that their announcement carefully avoided giving any detail concerning the nature of the missile tested—whether it is a mere test device or the prototype of a production weapon. Nor can we know the meaning of the phrase "in the target area" used to describe the missile's accuracy, since we are given no information about the range of the missile fired and the size of the target area; which leads to the conclusion that the Soviets know they still have a long way to go. The Russian lead is not particularly significant until they have in hand either vast numbers of comparatively inaccurate missiles or much smaller but still considerable numbers of comparatively accurate missiles, by which time the technological advantage may have shifted back and forth a number of times, with sometimes the US, sometimes the USSR in the lead.

Moreover, unless missiles of almost incredible accuracy are developed, or unless the ICBM is accompanied by the development of an anti-air missile defense of almost equally incredible effectiveness, the achievement of operational ICBM's on either side—and regardless which side has them first—will not affect the stalemate of "mutual terror," because bombers will still get through and deliver their bombs with far greater precision and destructiveness. Nevertheless, the announcement may be expected to have a disturbing effect upon our allies, who are made nervous by any new evidence of Soviet technical prowess or Soviet determination to achieve a dominant military position. It should perhaps be added that there is a real danger too that the announcement may stir Congress to insist upon further distortion of our defense programs in the direction of exclusive dependence upon the "deterrence" of threatened total war.

In all rocket weaponry the matter of accuracy is decisive. When long-range rockets become accurate enough so that an economically feasible number can be sure of knocking out air bases thousands of miles away, the manned bomber is finished. But so is it finished when rocket anti-air defenses become accurate enough so that despite all the defense-penetration devices the bombers cannot hope to evade the defense. Undoubtedly such a day is coming. But it is still in the future; how far it is difficult to tell. And it will remain difficult to tell, because accuracy is far easier to keep secret than the existence of a weapon, and more tempting to exaggerate. Furthermore, because of the speeds involved and the consequent reduction of warning time, and also because of the possibility of greater dispersal of the attack,

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defense against missiles, though possible, is unlikely ever to catch up with the attack.

The prospect, then, is that the strategic East-West stalemate will continue into the missile age. The Russians are doubtless attracted by the fact that the rise of the ICBM will eventually render our impressive strategic air force obsolete. But we can take comfort from the fact that the missile age appears likely to reduce the value of the initiative, that is, the danger to us of a Russian surprise attack. This is because if our missile launching sites are widely dispersed and at least some of them hidden, the Russians cannot hope to destroy our retaliation force.

Assuming what seems highly likely, that neither side will achieve a position of decisive advantage over the other in time, in numbers, or in accuracy, the ICBM will not make resort to general nuclear war any less of an absurdity. Indeed, it may finally silence those who deny that general nuclear war is mutual suicide for the US and the USSR. But this will only increase the temptation to our adversaries to engage in aggressive moves they are sure would not provoke us to suicidal reaction. Thus the missile age will not reduce the attractiveness of limited national objectives, or remove the problem of limited war, and it is this which our official strategists who still speak of the "deterrence" of "massive retaliation" find it so hard to acknowledge.

A Fourth Negro

PHILADELPHIA today is the scene of a silent transfer of political power which finds a big city machine achieving peaceably what in other Northern communities has provoked bitter inter-racial hostilities. In an engineered political "fix," Rep. Earl Chudoff won uncontested nomination recently as the Democratic candidate for municipal judge in this fall's election—to make way for a Negro as the party candidate for Congress. Chudoff's Fourth District, a 2-1 Democratic stronghold, has gone from 44 percent Negro registration in 1952 to 57 percent in 1956 (Philadelphia is one of the few Northern cities which registers by race). Assuming that Chudoff wins his judgeship, a special election will be necessary to fill his seat. And since the Democrats will nominate a Negro—Councilman Raymond Pace Alexander is favored—and the Republicans, who have habitually tried to unseat Chudoff with Negro candidates, are expected to follow suit, a fourth Negro Congressman seems certain to join Chicago's William Dawson, Detroit's Charles Diggs, Jr., and New York's Adam Clayton Powell.

What the Philadelphia machine leaders have done to keep abreast of Negro migration can be studied profitably by all Northern urban Democrats. For preliminary analysis of the Wisconsin Senatorial election shows that the Negroes there were the only voting group which did not swing heavily away from past support for Republican candidate Kohler. Last week's Negro vote in Wisconsin will be analyzed in a coming article on the shifting Negro vote by elections-expert Richard Scammon.

Suicide, Homicide & Beer

WITH AN impressive portfolio of statistics firmly in hand, the *Economist* for August 17 squarely faced up to the question of "The British—Are They Subhuman?" Actually not, the *Economist* concluded; a good many nations, it seems, wallow deeper in vice than Great Britain. But to us the most interesting finding to emerge from this study was the fact that, in almost every department, we Americans turn out to be sub-British.

Let us begin with tobacco consumption. The annual consumption per head in the United Kingdom is 4.8 pounds—in America, 6.8 pounds. When it comes to beer consumption, the British show a slight superiority in depravity, 17.8 gallons per capita to 13.1 for us. But when we turn to the annual per capita consumption of hard liquor, as measured in proof gallons, we leave the British trailing far astern. Every man, woman and child of us manages to find room for .89 gallons annually, while our counterparts on the other side of the Atlantic swallow a mere .23 gallons. If it weren't, alas, for the Swedish sots, who run that country's total up to 1.08, we would easily lead the world—or at least the free world. When it comes to wine-bibbing, though, neither Americans nor Britons amount to much, consuming mere fractions of a gallon per head. Honors in this department go, predictably, to the French, each of whom manages to down a staggering 21.06 gallons every year.

France has very few drug addicts, however, only 2 per million population. Britain manages to turn out 6 addicts per million, but once again we Americans forge ahead with no fewer than 66 per million. Little Denmark manages to run this figure up to 135, which may throw new light upon the Danish habit of "heavy-headed revel" that so offended Hamlet. But it is Canada, surprisingly, that tops the list, with 220 addicts per million.

When it comes to suicide, West Berliners enjoy the dubious distinction of leading the world, at the rate of 29.6 per 100,000 population. The United Kingdom is far down the list, with only 10.6, and we follow directly after, with 10.1. But in regard to the practice of homicide, America once more takes the lead, with an imposing record of 4.8 murders per 100,000 population. It is true that Alaskans do better, killing one another at the rate of 7.2 per 100,000, but surely we may claim the credit, since Alaska, though not yet a state *is* American. As murderers, the British are only middling. They lose only seven-tenths of a citizen that way per 100,000.

With regard to divorces, Alaska and America come in first and second again, with 2.58 per thousand and 2.35 respectively. The UK is back among the stragglers, with

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"Sick of Politics"

"THE COUNTRY," said a New York daily paper recently, "is sick of party politics and sick of party politicians, but somehow it seems to have lost its capacity for political initiative." Both of these statements are true. The country in the sense of practically all reflective and well-informed public opinion is sick of party politics and party politicians, but the people who are sick of party politics and politicians are divided and skeptical about the best method of giving effective political expression to their discontent. That portion of the public which has provided the soil in which progressive agitations have grown seems incapable of originating and carrying through a progressive political campaign. The aggressive forces in American opinion which from the foundation of the Republic until 1912 were always starting off buoyantly and confidently on some new adventure in active political idealism are at present inert and sterile. . . .

If the discontented minority is to regain the effective political initiative which is so necessary to the reformation of a democratic society, American progressives need to reconsider both their own task and the situation of their country. They do not possess a sufficiently strong grip on popular confidence to justify them in plunging again into political agitation with the expectation of taking political and economic power away from its present custodians. That power will remain for a long time to come in the hands of politicians and business men similar to those who now rule us. But the progressives should not be discouraged at the prospect of being excluded from the exercise of political and economic power. The people who have to conduct the business and politics of the world are going to have a bad time of it. Modern democratic nations are destined for many years to lead disorderly and disappointing careers. Neither the progressive nor the conservative elements in society will possess the self-confidence and the knowledge to operate their governments successfully; and under such circumstances it is both prudent and fair to let the people who believe in the present social organization and standards assume responsibility for the disorder and the resulting discontent.

But although they will be for the most part excluded from power, progressives will not vindicate themselves merely by uttering sardonic comments on the failure of their opponents. The failure is not of one party. It is the failure of a civilization, which depends for its vitality on cooperation but which does not know how to base cooperation on consent. The progressives and the radicals are as incapable of repairing the failure as the conservatives. But they will have an enormous advantage over conservatives if they will admit their own incompetence and consider seriously how they may remove it.

They will prepare for that difficult task better by keeping on the margin of political agitation rather than by becoming absorbed into the full sweep of its current. For one of the great lessons which the Twentieth Century has to learn is that the Nineteenth Century expected to accomplish too much by means of politics. Democrats and aristocrats, socialists and reactionaries all overemphasized the importance of political machinery and the scope of possible political achievement.

The chief function of the wise liberal during the next generation is to investigate the ability of individuals and groups to bring about an improved quality of human relations by other than political means. Modern society cannot depend upon legislation to do away with the abuses and the failures of private business. It cannot depend upon economic motives to bring about the social cohesion which political democracy has tried and failed to achieve. The frank recognition of these limitations of political and economic activities is the beginning of modern wisdom. The future belongs to that party or movement or nation or church which understands and acts on this truth.

Both industry and democracy as now organized and conducted train men and women in the art of exercising power for individual or class purposes rather than in the art of constructive human association. So they will remain until the ultimate units of association in industry, politics and social life are organized primarily not to produce Fords or law and order or superfluous display but as schools in which people of different outlooks and interest learn how by experience and otherwise to understand and work one with another.

—*The New Republic*

June 7, 1922

a mere .55, and the Portuguese, with a laughable .11 per thousand, have scarcely left the post.

The *Economist* did not press the point, but it is obvious that in every category save suicide (which was nearly a tie) and beer drinking, we Americans are a good deal more depraved than the British. There is no reason why next year shouldn't see a clean sweep for the American team. Beating the British at suicide presents no problem: we can surely "reclassify" enough superfluous murders to make the difference, and without fear of jeopardizing our position as world leader in homicide. Beating the British at beer drinking may be harder. It will require that every American man, woman and child consume an *extra* 4.8 gallons of beer in 1957, which will not be easy, particularly for the younger children. We ought to bear in mind, however, that the British manage to do it—drinking *warm* beer, at that—and anything they can do, we can do better, however bad it may be.

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Harold Gibbons— Hoffa's Left Hand

THE MAN who walks by Jimmie Hoffa's side in the Teamsters Union is not, as TV watchers would have every reason to expect, a Detroit hoodlum or a New York racketeer—he is a one-time CIO leader with a Socialist past, 47-year-old Harold J. Gibbons of St. Louis, who has been a Teamster for less than a decade. There are those Gibbons' friends (loyal) who say he is still the old idealist, and point to the model Democratic practices of his home local. There are other friends (disenchanted) who believe he no longer cares how he gets what he wants as long as he gets it.

In any event, Gibbons' rise within the tradition-and-corruption-encrusted Teamsters hierarchy has been spectacular. At the Teamsters' last convention in Los Angeles in 1952, Gibbons was a stranger to most of his fellow delegates. He won't win a popularity contest when the union reconvenes in Miami Beach this month—presumably to replace Dave Beck with James Hoffa. He is still called "that CIO Communist punk" by many of the older union leaders. But he will be "the man to see" when Hoffa isn't around. He announced Hoffa's candidacy for president of the union, and he directed the 800-man caucus in Chicago which launched the Hoffa boom. If Hoffa becomes president, Gibbons probably will become his executive assistant.

Where Hoffa is the product of the shadow-world of muscle men and juke-box locals, Gibbons comes out of the hectic CIO organizing drives of the thirties. What Hoffa is politically is hard to say; Gibbons is an ADA Democrat. He may sell his four-syllable ideas to union colleagues with four-letter words, but he does have the ideas.

Gibbons has the "correct" background. He was the youngest of 23 children in a Pennsylvania coalminer's family. He never finished high school; he tried his hand at the cook's trade; he turned to warehousing and then to the commercial construction industry where he grabbed onto the bottom rung as a common laborer. But by 1931 he was again out of work—and without any prospects, and he drifted into the Socialist Party revival which immediately preceded the New Deal.

Older radicals, including labor leaders of the Debs era and social workers attached to the YWCA industrial department, encouraged him; they arranged for a summer scholarship to the University of Wisconsin School for Workers, then a kind of training laboratory for aspiring union organizers. Gibbons returned to Chicago and became a teacher in the WPA Workers' Education projects, and at the same time helped organize his fellow WPA teachers into a local of the American Federation of Teachers; the kid who never got a high school diploma was vice president of the national union by the time he was 25.

But the Teachers Union was no place for an ambitious fellow. Two years later, the Chicago Socialists began organizing the city's cab drivers and Gibbons threw himself enthusiastically into the strike. He next joined the Textile Workers' organizing drive, and there he was known as an ace organizer—but something less than a stable business agent. He came into conflict with Sidney Hillman, the CIO leader who directed the textile drive; and he quit after he was abruptly shifted from command of a Louisville strike because his superiors had decided no settlement was possible while he was around.

By 1941, Gibbons was 31 years old and ready to settle down. He picked St. Louis, where the CIO United Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Employees Union had three loose-knit locals with some 1,000 members. Seven years later, Gibbons had transformed these into a single, coordinated local union of 6,500 members. He thereupon bolted the CIO (the provocation was extreme, since the leadership of the URWDSE was fantastically incompetent) and went independent.

BUT an independent local in the American labor movement is a sitting duck for rival unions with similar jurisdictions, and it wasn't long before Gibbons had an ultimatum from the St. Louis Teamsters: "Join the Teamsters—the easy way or the hard way." Gibbons' reaction was to call a meeting of stewards from every shop represented in his local; they warned they would strike the entire industry if the Teamsters tried to make good the threat. Gibbons then went shopping for affiliation elsewhere. He says that other CIO and AFL internationals slammed the door in his face. He finally sat down with Dave Beck, then Teamster executive vice president.

To get into the Teamsters, Gibbons agreed to merge his local with a smaller Teamsters local in St. Louis with similar jurisdiction; part of the merger agreement was a decision to "retire" the old-line Teamsters business agent by paying him $36,000 in advance salary. Gibbons explains this decision, which was made publicly at a membership meeting, by the fact that the Teamsters official still had three years of his elective term to go and that practice in Gibbons' local had been to treat business agents as staff personnel, subject to hiring and firing, rather than as elective officials. But his explanation has not dispelled doubts that Gibbons had "bought his way" into the Teamsters—or had been bought.

"My friends thought the Teamsters would chop my head off," he recalls. "Well, I'm still around—and so is my local." This is an understatement. Gibbons now is top man in the St. Louis union council, the Missouri-

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Kansas state organization, secretary-general of the Central States conference and chairman of the union's national warehouse conference. His St. Louis local is non-segregated (Hoffa's reputation as one of the Negro workers' best friends is probably the result of Gibbons' influence), has extensive rank-and-file participation, a pioneering health program which provides medical care for members and their families, and a record of having negotiated long-term contracts with a Teamster version of the guaranteed annual wage.

Perhaps the crucial decision for Gibbons *vis-à-vis* the Teamsters came soon after he had joined up. Some local hoodlums, apparently with powerful Teamsters connections, demanded that Gibbons place one of their boys on the union payroll. Looking for protection, Gibbons journeyed to Detroit to talk with James Hoffa, then a local Teamsters leader whose reputation for toughness was known beyond Michigan. Hoffa put Gibbons and his local under his wing; the St. Louis mobsters retreated. Gibbons' gratitude blossomed into fervent admiration.

His first task as a Hoffa lieutenant was to get the power to clean up the situation in other St. Louis Teamsters locals. With Hoffa's backing, Gibbons conducted a ruthless campaign (it was charged that "goon squads" were used), ousted a number of entrenched officers with bad-smelling reputations and then reconstituted the locals under a leadership composed largely of members of Gibbons' own staff.

WHY Hoffa, the pal of hoodlums and confidant of criminals, chose to accept Gibbons as a protegé, is less puzzling than has been made out. Hoffa was looking to expand his power and the power of his union. So was (and is) Gibbons. Both men have dreams of glory—expanding Teamster membership from 1.3 million to 2 million; organizing the South. Each respects success and the special talents of the other, and believes the ends of unionism justify the means (Gibbons is a militant; violence—in a good cause—doesn't shock him.) Each is confident that although he uses questionable associates, he is not used in return. Each believes the other's heart is in the right place—with the workers. Each is unimpressed by charges that he associates with hoodlums; what important AFL official, they ask, hasn't or doesn't? The superficial differences are of little moment; Hoffa is the non-drinking, non-smoking family man; Gibbons, one hears, is not.

When Hoffa organized the Central States Conference of Teamsters in 1954, he hand-picked Gibbons as secretary-treasurer, although few of the delegates who voted for him knew the St. Louis man, and those that did weren't sure they liked him. As acting director and then chairman of the national warehousing conference, Gibbons began dealing with Teamsters leaders in all 48 states—including men whose reputations were worse than the men he had ousted in St. Louis.

Throughout his rise, Gibbons has retained his title as secretary-treasurer of his home local and has shrugged off proposals to accept a full-time paid position on either the international or central conference staff. As of today, Gibbons remains on the St. Louis payroll at $15,000 a year. His trips out of the city are on an expense account, and these have brought criticism of Gibbons' high living. ("I guess that Harold has reached the stage now," an old admirer commented, "that he can give a $10 bill to a head-waiter without being embarrassed").

The local embodies a good many of Gibbons' ideas about proper unions. It publishes a semi-monthly newspaper which regularly carries both detailed monthly financial reports and comprehensive minutes of meetings of the shop stewards council. This stewards' council is the key to Gibbons' conception of democratic unionism. He is disdainful of the "town meeting" practices of most large unions which leave basic decisions to a handful of regulars who show up for membership meetings. (Hoffa told the Senate Rackets Committee that decisions in his local of 14,000 usually are made by "two, three or four hundred" and can legally be made by as few as seven members.) Instead, Gibbons has evolved a representative government by which each group of 25 workers elects a steward (who can be recalled at any time), and the stewards' meetings have the full legal authority to commit the union. The council exercises a veto power on officers' reports, decides basic issues and approves the business agents and staff. On some issues, Gibbons turns to the entire memberhip by secret-ballot referendum at the shop; a recent dues assessment passed with 90 percent membership participation.

This representative form of governing recently has been carried over into citizenship activity with "community stewards" elected to represent each 15 union members in a neighborhood. The community stewards are given a short course in civic policy, then are on call to represent union members in their relationships with city officials and politicians—just as the shop steward processes grievances with foremen or supervisors.

He's power-mad, say some of his critics (and they include the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*). "Sure," says Gibbons, "I like authority—because it lets me get things done."

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Wordsworth by Cable

by ROBERT GRAVES

WORDSWORTH seems to have left his first draft of *Solitary Reaper* untouched: on the theory, perhaps, that a sketch has a certain ingenuous bloom which the finished picture may lose:

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar the matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending; —
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

For a poem of such seeming simplicity *The Solitary Reaper* proves on examination to be peculiarly artificial:

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!

There are only two figures in sight: Wordsworth and the Highland Lass—yet he cries "Behold her!" Do any of you find that reasonable? Perhaps you think that he is telling readers merely to picture her as they sit with the book open before them? Very well! But what of the next line:

Stop here, or gently pass!

and again:

O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound . . .

How can readers stop, pass, or listen if they aren't there?

Very well! Let us assume that Wordsworth is soliloquizing on both occasions. Then why does he tell himself *"Behold her!"* when he has already done so? And why *"O listen!"* He can hardly help listening, because the vale profound is overflowing with the sound. And why: *"Stop here, or gently pass"?* It is not even an exclusive alternative: as we learn later, Wordsworth first stopped for awhile and then passed gently on. I'm afraid we must agree that he wrote *"or gently pass!"* for the sake of the rhyme; and that *"Behold her!"* and *"O listen!"* are Latin verse tricks. Wordsworth was also a Cambridge graduate.

Have you ever seen a squirrel "appreciating" hickory nuts? It weighs them in its little paws and flings away the light ones. Well, a good habit which I recommend to all you young squirrels as a test of your own poems, is to weigh them. You can turn it into a game called "Cables." Imagine yourself badly off for cash and having to cable the *sense* of this first verse, at your own expense, to a friend in New Zealand. By the rules, you must use Wordsworth's own vocabulary, and leave out no word of importance. What about this?

SOLITARY HIGHLAND LASS REAPING BINDING GRAIN STOP MELANCHOLY SONG OVERFLOWS PROFOUND VALE

Twelve words instead of 44! Wordsworth has (did you notice?) used four synonyms for her loneliness: *"single," "solitary," "alone," "by herself"*; and two for her sickle-work: *"reaping"* and *"cutting"*; and has mentioned her voice four times: *"singing," "sings," "strain,"*

ROBERT GRAVES *is, of course, the celebrated British poet and man of letters. This is the second of two essays on poetry, the first of which—on Milton—appeared in the May 24 issue of* The New Republic.

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"sound." All true poetry is economical of words. Try putting:

> Come unto these yellow sands,
> And then take hands . . .
>
> Full fathom five thy father lies,
> O, his bones are coral made . . .

into cablese! You wouldn't save much money.

Wordsworth feels the need for poetic contrast to this rugged Highland scene. Something warm and luscious:

> No Nightingale did ever chaunt
> More welcome notes to weary bands
> Of travellers in some shady haunt,
> Among Arabian sands . . .

Personally, I regard *"chaunt"* (or even *"chant"*) as an affectation when used of birds. Monks and sorcerers chant; birds sing. But let that pass. Now for the sense. It is true that occasional nightingales, or bulbuls, penetrate to the more verdurous parts of Arabia Felix, but only as winter migrants, when heavy rains provide them with grubs and caterpillars, and never nest there; consequently they do not *"chaunt."*

Then Wordsworth thinks up a poetic contrast to perpetually sun-smitten Arabia—something bitterly cold and frozen:

> A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
> In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
> Breaking the silence of the seas
> Among the farthest Hebrides . . .

"Cuckoo-bird" is pretended innocent baby-talk for "cuckoo," on the analogy of "dickey-bird." Occasional cuckoos do get so far north as the Hebrides; but in springtime the Hebredean seas, which Wordsworth seems to imagine as icebound, are at their noisiest—the islands enjoy a remarkably temperate climate, because of the Gulf Stream; and the cuckoo's arrival coincides with the equinoctial gales. Moreover, Wordsworth does not seem to have considered that all the Outer (or Farther) Hebrides are inhabited by other loud-voiced Highland Lasses singing in competition with the cuckoo.

He goes on:

> Will no one tell me what she sings?

Who could? Nobody is present except Wordsworth and the single, solitary girl, all alone and by herself, whom he is too shy to accost.

> Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow . . .

"Plaintive numbers" is utterly wrong in this Ossianic context. The Highland Lass, who seems to have sung her lay in Gaelic (since Wordsworth didn't understand a syllable of it, however loud she sang), could certainly not be described as singing in *"numbers."* "Numbers" are a translation of the Latin *numeri*, which implies a strictly observed metrical scheme; whereas Gaelic lays are wild and fitful as the breeze.

> For old, unhappy, far-off things,
> And battles long ago . . .

"Old," "far-off," "long ago": three near-synonyms. Yet the two lines have an innocent, compelling ring, the only justification of the poem—until prosily interrupted by:

> Or is it some more humble lay,
> Familiar matter of today?
> Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
> That has been, and may be again?

Wordsworth gives up the problem:

> Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
> As if her song could have no ending;
> I saw her singing at her work,
> And o'er the sickle bending; —
> I listened, motionless and still;
> And, as I mounted up the hill,
> The music in my heart I bore,
> Long after it was heard no more.

I leave you to play "Cables" with this last verse, too; though, after the first six lines, which can be reduced to nine words, your cable will run you into money:

> CANCEL MY PREVOUS COMMUNICATION STOP SONG DID NOT OVERFLOW PROFOUND VALE STOP CEASED TO HEAR IT LONG BEFORE MOUNTING HILL BUT BORE MUSIC IN HEART

I SHOULD define a good poem as one that makes complete sense; and says all it has to say memorably and economically; and has been written for no other than poetic reasons. By "other than poetic reasons" I mean political, philosophical, or theological propaganda, and every sort of careerist writing. Careerism is the plague of modern poetry, as it was of the early 18th Century. Wordsworth, when he had written the *Lucy* poems and others in the same vein (which are good if a trifle clumsy) turned careerist. Largely because of him the old-fashioned terms "great poets," "major poem," "higher stature," still persist; and in the United States especially, where there is enough loose money about to make poetical careerism profitable, poetry has become a dog-eat-dog game. Here poets no longer compete in writing good poems, they are all trying to be listed as "great new experimental masters in the line of Eliot and Pound."

Neither Eliot nor Pound are, however, great experimentalists, except in the sense that they once tried adapting modern French poetic theory to English verse; and Pound-Eliot experimentation of the early Twenties is already as dated as a streamlined pogo-stick with decorative motifs from Tutankhamen's tomb. Many Americans of that day thought it cleverer to go French in verse (and German in scholarship) than to develop their predomi-

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nantly English tradition in an American sense; yet the true American masters of experiment were such poets as John Crowe Ransom and Robert Frost. Their experiments do not date, because each adapted his individual speech-rhythm and diction to agreed verse-forms—as Shakespeare did—and produced something startlingly new and lasting.

I remember my delight in 1922, when I first opened Frost's *North of Boston,* and came across:

The Mountain

The mountain held the town as in a shadow.
I saw so much before I slept there once:
I noticed that I missed stars in the west,
Where its black body out into the sky.
Near me it seemed: I felt it like a wall
Behind which I was sheltered from a wind.
And yet between the town and it I found,
When I walked forth at dawn to see new things,
Were fields, a river, and beyond, more fields.
The river at the time was fallen away,
And naked to the spleen of the cold skies eruptive
But the signs showed what it had done in spring:
Good grassland gullied out, and in the grass
Ridges of sand, and driftwood stripped of bark . . .

And I remember my delight when John Crowe Ransom sent me from Nashville, Tennessee, his hitherto unpublished *Ilex Priscus*:

He is a tower unleaning. But he may break,
If Heaven in a rage try him too windily;
And what uproar tall towers concumbent make;

More than a hundred years, more than a hundred feet
Of timeless trunk that is too vast to shake;
Only the temporal twigs are abashed on their seat.

And the frail leaves of a season, which are susceptive
Of the mad humours of wind, and turn and beat
Ecstatic round the stem to which they are captive.
But he casts the feeble generations of leaf,
And naked to the spleen of the cold skies eruptive
That howl on his defiant head in chief,

Bears out their frenzy to its period,
And hears in the spring, a little more rheumy and deaf,
After the tragedy, the lyric palinode . . .

I confess that it is far easier to say why a poem is bad, than why it is good. Criticizing a good poem, as both of these are, suggests trying to scale a tower of such perfectly fitted masonry that one can find neither finger-hold nor toe-hold.

Not long ago I denounced a widespread critical plot to make "great" a better epithet than "good." An English critic had written that one becomes "great" by presenting "a diploma piece" of "major form"—such as Eliot's *Four Quartets,* or Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly.* I protested that, according to the logicians, nothing is better than the truly good, not even the truly great; therefore, what is not truly good, however great, must be either to some degree evil (an active denial of good) or to some degree bad (a falling short of good). It followed that all truly "great" diploma pieces, unless truly bad, were likely to be truly evil—inspired by ambition, the vice which caused Lucifer's downfall. It was my opinion, I said, that *The Four Quartets* could hardly be called either bad or evil. Their chief appeal was a macabre one, as when one sees zombies still working posthumously on the old sugar plantation. In Pound's *Mauberly,* I found the poetic technique poor, the thought muddled, and the emotions vulgar.

To this the English critic (whose name, by the way, was Wharton) replied that it was unseemly for me to discuss "major form"; because, though I had written excellent lyrics within my self-imposed limitations, my work contained no diploma pieces. Then he offered me a "major lyric" of Ezra Pound's to illustrate what he meant:

O Lynx, guard this orchard
Keep from Demeter's furrow
This fruit has a fire within it,
Pomona, Pomona
No glass is clearer than are the globes of this flame
What sea is clearer than the pomegranate body holding
the flame?
Pomona, Pomona.
Lynx, keep watch on this orchard
That is named Melagrana
or the Pomegranate field
The sea is not clearer in azure
Nor the Heliads bringing light
Here are lynxes Here are lynxes,
Is there a sound in the forest
of pard or of bassarid
or crotale or of leaves moving?

I was grateful to be given a text for discussion; but, though I am as smart as the next man in looking through a brick wall, I could get only as far as where a lynx is improbably asked to keep from Demeter's furrow a clear flaming pomegranate-like fruit in an orchard sacred to Pomona. There the trail went cold, despite Heliads, pards and bassarids "such as any college library will supply" (Dr. Johnson on *Lycidas*). *Crotale* is probably an approximation to *crotalon*, the Greek word for "rattle"; as *Melagrana* probably is to *Malagranata* the medieval Latin for "pomegranate." The Greek for "pomegranate-field" would probably be *rhoion*, on the analogy of *ampelon,* "a vineyard"; and why use medieval Latin in a Classical Greek context—even if the speaker is supposed to be so drunk that he telescopes his sentences? And what is Pomona, the Latin Goddess of Fruit-trees doing here? There were no pards, lynxes, or Bassarids in her Italian territory; and the pomegranate was a solemn fruit, sacred to Infernal Persephone (or

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Prosperina), not associated with the revels of the Bassarids, or with Dionysius' pards.

If this was a major lyric, I said, might I never write one!

Modern poetical experiment has been influenced by non-representational painting and sculpture; especially in the abandonment of metre. Everyone, as far as I am concerned, may make what experiments he pleases; but poetry is necessarily linked with metrical forms designed to create in the listener, or reader, a hypersensitive awareness of the meaning. Personal rhythmic variations can be, and should be, made on the metrical norm—I have quoted Frost and Ransom—just as one expresses one's personality by an individual variation of copper-plate handwriting. Verse forms are elastic and can be subjected to great stress under poetic emotions, but they have their breaking point. When broken, and called "free verse," there is no metrical norm left to make variations on.

Eliot has written about free verse:

> It is not defined by non-existence of metre, since even the worst verse can be scanned. . . . But the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form, like the iambic pentameter, and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one. It is this contrast between fixity and flux, this unperceived evasion of monotony, which is the very life of verse.

I can make nothing of Eliot's cautiously negative remark—"free verse is not defined by the non-existence of metre, since even the worst verse can be scanned." If verse *can* be scanned, it is not freed of metre; and whether it may be good or bad seems irrelevant to the argument. As for Eliot's saying that "the most interesting verse which has yet been written in our language has been done either by taking a very simple form . . . and constantly withdrawing from it, or taking no form at all, and constantly approximating to a very simple one"—well, "doing" that sort of verse is interesting to some, but embarrassing to others, like a jaunt in the family car after mixing a little water with the gasoline to make it go by fits and starts. I was never partial to such experiments. I expect verse to be verse, and prose to be prose. Keeping the demands of verse should be an easy burden to a poet, unless he puts himself in a strait-jacket of metres so strict that they allow him no imaginative play at all—as the court bards of Wales did.

THE experimental change from metre to free verse began around 1911, when English poetry was in the doldrums and very few poets were about. With it went a reaction against the habits persisting from the time when Pope and his careerist followers tried to "freeze" poetry in gentlemanly forms. This convention had been widened by the Romantic Revivalists, who sanctioned new metres and an enlarged vocabulary; but it remained false. The poet still put on his singing-robes and laurel crown and made as if to twang the property lyre; the use of *thou* and *thee*, which elsewhere survived only among hymn writers and Quakers was encouraged; and so were inversions of noun and adjective, *mountains cold* or *vale profound*, and such obsolete words as *whene'er, whate'er, flowerets, roundelays, darkling*, and the like. The *vers libre* reformation was followed by a counter-reformation among the traditionalists—the so-called "Georgians"—who tried to get behind Milton to a simple, unaffected English manner. The *vers-librists* howled them down, and I must admit that the Georgians who won the literary prizes were a pretty dull lot.

After World War I, as I was saying, many young American poets went over to Paris and *vers libre*; with the result that, when the Depression sent them home again, those who thought it would now be smart to try metre had never learned the art of accepting metrical discipline while keeping their individuality. Their ill-success with verse led them through new *isms* and new stylistic excesses, to the point where legitimate criticism breaks down altogether; its author, modelling himself on the non-representational artist, attempts no coherent statement, but merely a significant abstract arrangement of sounds and emotional phrases. Now, "significant" is a word that once carried a burden on its back. Rheumatic pains were found significant of approaching rain. Double vision was significant of having drunk too much. Posting a letter in one's own mail-box was significant of schizophrenia. But nowadays the word has dropped its burden. "This is a significant picture," pronounces the art-dealer. "This is a significant poem," writes the magazine editor. If critics are not told what the picture or poem is "significant" of, they are baffled. And the baffling of criticism has become a worldwide sport. So, as I say, the critics turn creative in self-defense.

I repeat that careerists are the plague of poetry: especially the modern careerist, who doubts whether he can make his name by traditional writing, yet shrinks from becoming a whole-hearted abstractionist. He will commit himself neither to a metre on which he can make his individual variations, nor to precise images and an accepted syntax; but takes Eliot's irresponsible advice and teases the critic by constantly approximating to sense and rhythmic pertinence, and then constantly withdrawing into deliberate nonsense.

Good poets are exceedingly rare; "great poets" are all too common. The poet who accepts his limitations and works to the point of exhaustion on getting every word of a poem into place, may yet fail, for one reason or another, to be as good as he intends:

> Yet shall he mount and keep his distant way
> Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate:
> Beneath the Good how far—but far above the
> Great . . .

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Letter from the Middle East

Some weeks ago, *The New Republic* was taunted by an editor of another weekly magazine: "When are you going to give Secretary Dulles credit for his brilliant diplomacy in the Middle East?" Has it been brilliant? We sent the question along to a Middle East contributor, H. A. R. Philby—son of the famous Arabist and adviser to the late King Saud, St. John Philby—who resides in Beirut and is correspondent for the London *Observer*. "Although it may seem presumptuous," Mr. Philby replied, "For an Englishman to criticize Mr. Dulles, I am emboldened to do so by sincere concern that the US Government should avoid our [British] mistakes, not repeat them." He then gave his reasons for doubting the brilliance of recent American diplomacy.

The editors of *NR* addressed some further questions to Mr. Philby as well as some opinions of our own: "If Mr. Dulles' diplomacy in the Middle East has been inept, should one conclude that inaction would be preferable: we would have thought that American inaction was at least partly responsible for the disastrous drift during 1948-56 which resulted in the Sinai campaign"; did he think the victory of the King in Jordan had been over-valued or incorrectly interpreted by the Western press; would he criticize our cordiality toward King Saud? And finally, we invited Mr. Philby's comment on our assumption that US policy ought to pursue two somewhat contradictory aims simultaneously: "the survival of Israel and the denying to Communism of the Middle East." We granted that "a degree of conflict is inevitable as one or the other of these objectives presses its demands," but asked whether that is not a "normal diplomatic situation (just as our NATO commitments may conflict with pro-independence policies in Africa)?"

Mr. Philby's answer was in the form of a letter, rather than an article, but we consider it so expressive of the point of view of a long-time student of Middle East affairs that we publish it here as received.

YOUR letter was handed to me only four days ago, after a prolonged tour in the Persian Gulf. I was aware, when I wrote my previous note, that it represented a minority view. But, until I received your letter, I did not realize how small that minority was in the United States!

You are right in describing the simultaneous pursuit of two conflicting policies as a "normal diplomatic situation"—though perhaps the word "common" ought to be substituted for "normal." But there are two dangers (at least). First, the government pursuing conflicting policies tends to forget that they are conflicting. Second, in forgetting—or perhaps wishfully thinking away—the conflict, it tends to act in a way calculated to exacerbate the conflict. That, I believe, is what is happening in the Middle East. Reading the statements of President Eisenhower and Mr. Dulles, for example, it is difficult to believe that they are not sincerely wedded to the following propositions: that the United States should work for an Arab-Israeli settlement; that King Hussein's *coup d'etat* was a gain for the West; that King Saud can be built up as a counterpoise to President Nasser; that "you cannot do business with Nasser"; that the Baghdad Pact is a contribution to the stability of the Middle East; that Syria is on the verge of Communism.

I am afraid that I regard all those propositions as profoundly wrong. Let me illustrate:

Western statesmen repeatedly urge a settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Now, when Mr. Dulles speaks of a settlement, he is thinking of a compromise that would "safeguard the legitimate rights" of Israel and the Arab states. What, asks a Westerner, could be more reasonable than that? The insuperable difficulty is that Arabs (all of them) deny that Israel has any rights in the area. All the rights are Arab rights. Therefore, any compromise conceding Israeli rights must be an infringement of Arab rights, and any government sponsoring it is hostile to Arab aspirations. So, when Mr. Dulles speaks of a settlement, he does nothing to bring a settlement nearer. But he does a lot to arouse Arab suspicions of US policy, and thereby edges the Arabs further towards the Eastern camp. (I am not concerned here to argue the rights and wrongs of the Arab case, but merely to state what it is).

Several Western governments, notably that of the United States, have declared that they favor freedom of navigation in the Gulf of Aqaba. Was it necessary to affront in this manner *all* Arab opinion — from Nasser to Nuri, from Khalid al Azm to King Saud? Would it not have been possible to declare that the question was one, not of policy, but of law, and to maintain a neutral attitude until the aggrieved party had obtained a ruling from the World Court?

You attribute the present situation to the "disastrous drift" of Western policy. I hesitate to accept that view. I think that the problem became insoluble when the state

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of Israel was created, and that it has become less tractable with every succeeding year. Now that Israel has emerged, owing to Arab folly and ineptitude, as the dominant military power in the region, the Arabs are less inclined than ever to accept the stranger in their midst. Anything that the Americans might have done in trying to effect a settlement would merely have embroiled them with one or other of the contestants, or with both; and, in the present phase, any US action would be balanced by Soviet counter-action. In dealing with an insoluble problem (as opposed to a difficult one), it is less valorous, but much more discreet, to do and say as little as possible. In the circumstances, it seems to me that the US Government would be best advised to declare that the solution of the problems of this area is primarily a matter for its peoples. Such a declaration would not worsen the position of Israel; and it would remove from the Arabs at least some of the temptation to look towards Moscow to redress the balance.

You remark that many Americans are "baffled by Saud's stand on Aqaba." For my part, I am baffled by their bafflement. King Saud's position on Aqaba was never in the slightest doubt. It has nothing to do with out-Nassering Nasser. It is due to genuine alarm and fury at the establishment at the head of the Gulf, of an Israeli commercial port and naval base.

Here, I think, we are on the fringe, perhaps quite near the middle, of an area of dangerous wishful thinking. It is a common assumption in American circles here that King Saud has been won over to Western policies. It would be nice to think so, but let us look at the problem from the Saudi angle. The King was gratified by his reception in the United States. He was convinced of the personal sincerity of President Eisenhower. He was pleased with the agreements for the Dhahran air base and for the supply of American arms for the Saudi forces (some of which I saw the other day at Nizwa, in Oman!). He may have been made slightly more aware of the relevance of the Communist danger to the Arab situation (I would not put it higher).

Now that, I believe, is about all. And if the Americans think that King Saud's fears of Israel and of Western imperialism (as exemplified by the British occupation of Buraimi and the invasion of Oman) have been dissipated, they are in for a lot more bafflement. The Amman communique on the occasion of King Saud's visit to King Hussein (which baffled both our Embassies by reaffirming in strong terms support for the "Arab Solidarity" system and condemnation of the Baghdad Pact) was one instance; King Saud's stand on Aqaba was another. Other issues on which King Saud will certainly disconcert the West are: Israeli rights in the Suez Canal; refugee resettlement; extension of the Baghdad Pact; the Yemeni dispute with Britain; the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms (when they achieve—as they certainly will—the status of an "issue"). The list could be prolonged. Perhaps we think that King Saud should entrust himself wholly to President Eisenhower's goodwill and sincerity. But who, asks the King (among other things), will succeed President Eisenhower?

Now Jordan. Here I find myself most completely at odds with the "American image of recent events." As I see it, the crisis arose from a prolonged struggle between the King and the government of Suliman Nabulsi. The King enjoyed the support of the following elements: perhaps half the officers' corps in the army and the police; most of the regular civil servants; most of the experienced politicians; perhaps a third of the middle class (say, two-thirds of the merchants and one-third of the intellectuals); and a majority of the bedouin. On the side of the government were ranged: a significant minority in the army and police; a significant minority in the civil service; half the middle class; a majority of the lower middle class; and almost the whole of the *lumpenproletariat* (among whom I count the wretched refugees—one-third of the whole population). In geographical terms, the struggle was between almost the whole of the West Bank plus about one-third of the East Bank (with the government) and two-thirds of the East Bank plus toeholds on the West Bank (with the King).

The above picture is, of course, an over-simplification, since it takes no account of the various degrees of commitment. For instance, many army officers and civil servants who favored the governments have since found it convenient to go along with the King.

The King's victory was against the odds. It was due partly to a brilliant personal achievement, partly to sound advice, partly (perhaps mostly) to the irresolution and inexperience of his opponents.

You will have seen that my analysis of the Jordan crisis relegates "Palestine refugee leaders" and foreign advisers and agents to a secondary role. They were certainly there; they played their parts. But they were extras on a very large stage. The stars were the revolutionary leaders of the emergent middle-class and the counter-revolutionary spokesmen of the established semi-feudal order. The haste with which the United States rushed to the support of the latter—no need for Eisenhower Doctrines or Richards Missions there!—must cause anxiety. For its principal effect is to wed the West for another few years to an order that is visibly on the way out. The romantic kings, the greybeard shaikhs, the dignified absentee landlords—these types may appeal to Western diplomats and newspapermen, but they do not appeal to the majority of the Arabs. The fact that the West appears to support them can only divert the main stream of Arab nationalism further and faster towards the East. The inability of the Western-supported regimes, like those of Jordan and Iraq, to shake themselves free of Nasser's foreign policies testifies to the shaky nature of the foundations on which they are based.

Well, I have said enough to indicate some of the main reasons why I disagree with current mental images. To put it in summary form, I think that the West has misread, or ignored, the historical processes now at work among the Arabs, and that it is trying to project into the '50's policies that were already dating in the '20's. The result of pursuing outdated policies will be a continuation of the dreary story of Arab turmoil and unrest, until someone decides to give the new forces their head. When (or if) that happens, you will be surprised, I think, by the ease with which you will do business with Nasser (or his grandchildren!).

H. A. R. PHILBY

Damascus, August 24

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BOOKS & COMMENT

An Uncertain Feeling in England

by Michael Millgate

On the London stage last summer there appeared a new play called *Look Back in Anger*, by a young man named John Osborne, which was enthusiastically received. The play's hero—one hesitates at the word — is Jimmy Porter, of working-class background, graduate of a provincial (*i.e.*, other than Oxford or Cambridge) university, to which he went, of course, like most English students, on a government grant. Shying away from regular work and from responsibility, Jimmy earns a kind of living by running a candy stall in a street-market, and lives with his wife and his good-natured business partner in an attic apartment strewn with newspapers, laundry and dirty crockery. The anger of the play's title is Jimmy's. He hurls sounding and furious invective at his friend, his wife, his wife's upper class family (the favorite target), the Church, the social system—the lot. He and his wife torture each other beyond endurance: eventually she leaves him, but at the end of the play returns, after having gone through the utter degradation to which Jimmy, out of hatred for her class, had always wanted to drag her, and a reconciliation takes place.

It sounds a sordid story, yet it is often extremely funny. It sounds utterly negative, yet certain things which are strongly positive emerge from it. Jimmy isn't a particularly pleasant character, and he isn't a typical one, yet he does have, raised to an abnormal intensity, many characteristics which are common to many young Englishmen. One reason for the play's popularity has undoubtedly been that younger people have recognized in Jimmy things that they recognize in themselves. For Jimmy has a kind of desperate integrity that will not allow him to tolerate or practice shams, to say polite words when he is thinking rude ones, to accept with good grace the superior social and political power of people for whom he has nothing but contempt. He is a kind of intellectual rebel without a cause. His father fought and died in the Spanish Civil War. Speaking of this, Jimmy says: "I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer. We had that done for us in the 'thirties and 'forties, when we were kids."

This remark of Jimmy's about no longer having good causes to die for seems to go to the heart of the matter. What is the good of being a radical if there is nothing to be radical about, if social ideals and social reality more or less coincide? For a hundred years or more British reformers and leaders of the working-class movement have been working towards social justice, towards social security and the Welfare State. Now this goal has been more or less achieved, and no new goals have as yet been clearly formulated; while the Welfare State itself, for all its great achievements, undoubtedly has made people less adventurous, more dependent on official bodies. British life has gone flat and rather dull. Or, at least, it was so last summer. Since then there have been tremendous political events which have divided public opinion more violently than anything since the Spanish Civil War and the Munich crisis of 1938. It remains to be seen whether the country has been jolted permanently or only temporarily out of its apathy.

The central work in the current mood, however, is undoubtedly Kingsley Amis' novel *Lucky Jim*. Athough it isn't, I think, all that good a book (though it *is* extremely funny), *Lucky Jim* has aroused more discussion than any other novel in years, and Jim Dixon himself is already a kind of symbolic figure, the type of the unanchored intellectual, of the rather lost university graduate who has been educated by the Welfare State out of the social class into which he was born. Jim is, in many ways, a less violent version of Jimmy Porter. He is, however, much more involved in the academic world: he is a junior faculty member in Medieval History (the assumed reaction is "Ugh!") at a provincial university. He hates his job and despises his colleagues: he thinks they are frauds, and he knows that, as a medieval historian, he himself is certainly a fraud. He rebels against his environment in various ungentlemanly ways and commits the most heinous social crimes (staying at the home of the head of his department he burns his bed-sheets while drunk and fails to inform anyone of the disaster next morning) but somehow he manages to evade all responsibility and all retribution, and in the end everything he has done nothing to deserve simply tumbles into his lap, including a pretty girl and the perfect job—vague, workless, and in London. That means salvation: to get back to London, to civilization; to escape from the tedium of regular work and regular hours: to escape, in particular, from the stifling drudgery of teaching; to escape responsibility.

That is more or less the burden of *Lucky Jim* and of Amis' second—in my view, much less successful—book *That Uncertain Feeling*. But both of these books are largely concerned with the exposure of shame and with the maintenance of a kind of personal integrity that forcibly contrasts with the essential dishonesty in both public affairs and personal relationships of those with superior official, economic or social power.

There have been several other novels in a similar vein: Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*, for example, and John Wain's *Hurry on Down*, in which the hero gets involved in dope-peddling and, indirectly, in murder (he has to earn a living somehow and he refuses outright to do anything so sordid as teach), but completely escapes detection and responsibility. Again, the book's ending is wholly "immoral" by conventional standards, but somehow these don't seem entirely applicable. One is reminded of Aldous Huxley's *Ant's Hay*, in which Theodore Gumbril, having invented Gumbril's Patent Small Clothes (inflatable trousers), throws up his teaching job, puts on a false red beard and embarks on a delicious and uninhibited career of sensation and se-

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duction. Indeed, "Lucky Jim" himself isn't as new a character as has sometimes been suggested. He represents a type, considered at its simplest, of the irresponsible, socially disruptive hero for whom everything turns out well at the end and whom one forgives, though often outraged, because he makes one laugh so and because he has a kind of perpetual boyish innocence which is appealing. What is new is the area of society from which the character comes.

Jim Dixon, then, is a symbol, even something of a heroic figure. In "Toads," an amusing poem by Philip Larkin, Jim's heroic qualities are very clearly suggested—for Jim, unlike the "I" of the poem, and unlike most of us, manages to break free from the petty restrictions of everyday existence and begin to live a life of his own.

> Why should I let the toad *work*
> Squat on my life?

is the question with which the poem opens; and here is part of the answer:

> Ah, were I courageous enough
> To shout *Stuff your pension!*
> But I know, all too well, that's the stuff
> That dreams are made on:
> For something sufficiently toad-like
> Squats in me, too;
> Its hunkers are heavy as hard luck,
> And cold as snow,
> And will never allow me to blarney
> My way to getting
> The fame and the girl and the money
> All at one sitting.

Philip Larkin, now in his early thirties, is widely regarded as the ablest of the younger English poets and has recently published his second volume of verse, *The Less Deceived*. There is plainly a great similarity in attitude and tone between Larkin and Amis, but Larkin brings out more clearly the fundamental pessimism and uncertainty that underlie the mood: for example, he speaks of Coventry, his home-city, as the place "where my childhood was unspent . . . just where I started," and he concludes the poem (it is called "I Remember, I Remember," with an obvious glance at Thomas Hood) with the bitter lines:

> "You look as if you wished the place in Hell,"
> My friend said, "judging from your face." "Oh well,
> I suppose it's not the place's fault,"
> I said.
> "Nothing, like something, happens anywhere."

Several other young English poets, notably Philip Oakes and Thom Gunn (though he is developing a quite distinctive manner of his own which is crisper, less relaxed, tougher than Larkin's), are writing rather similar verse. Kingsley Amis and John Wain, already mentioned as novelists, have both recently published volumes of verse. What these poets have in common is a deceptive casualness of approach and a fondness for a conversational manner combined with rather rigid verse-patterns—and a sense of humor. This last seems very significant: all the writers mentioned write amusingly (which, of course, does not mean unseriously) a great deal of the time. There is in this clearly an element of defense against an over-organized and under-sensitive world which the writer or artist can no longer even pretend to dominate and which perpetually threatens to dominate him.

If one had to sum up what Lucky Jim and his entourage stand for, what the current mood in England is about, then one would have to use such terms as the renunciation of responsibilities and the inversion of accepted values: but one would also have to make it clear that these things subserved the assertion of an, if necessary, anti-social and even bloody-minded individualism — at all events, an individualism, and at best a profound personal integrity. And though the current mood may display few graces, it can boast at least that saving one.

His Excellency's Looking-Glass

by Paul Tremaine

SINCE the Falstaffian character is a universal one, it is not surprising that the greatest of Shakespeare's clowns should turn up in Boston under the name of James Michael Curley. Like Falstaff, Curley had wit, brains, a facile tongue, an engaging manner, a keen eye for the main chance. Like Falstaff, who carried the king's writ and commanded the ear of the prince, Curley knew his heyday — once governor of Massachusetts, sometimes Congressman, four times mayor of Boston. And—like Falstaff—he heard in the end, from the power that had supported him, those same harsh words of rejection: "I know thee not, old man."

I'd Do It Again. A Record Of All My Uproarious Years, by James Michael Curley (Prentice-Hall; $4.95).

But Curley has made one mistake Falstaff never made; he has written his autobiography, and the results are not altogether fortunate. Let me qualify that. There *are* moments. Curley remembers "the seagulls which screeched as they wheeled for the fish over the edges of the Roxbury flats, and the croaking of frogs at night. . . . the schooners and other rigged vessels from 'remote' places like Maine and Nova Scotia." He remembers tramping around barefooted, and seeing the wagons sunk hub-deep in the mire after a summer rain. . . . "the rotting fish shining in the sun on the mud flats of Northampton Street, the big wharf rats that scurried around, and the flies and mosquitoes unobstructed by house screens . . . corned beef was five cents a pound, a peck of potatoes a dime, and a large cabbage cost only a few cents." In an almost Saroyanesque mood, he recalls

> . . . evenings when my father or his friends used to give someone a dime and send him down to the corner tavern . . . for a large pitcher of beer. They had learned that by rubbing the interior of the pitcher with butter it was possible to get more beer and less foam.

There are glimpses of the youthful Curley struggling up four flights of tenement stairs to deliver a barrel of flour, of political clubs complete with spittoon and pot-bellied stove, of grim, king-making old ward bosses, of wondrous characters who voted 29 times in a single election. There are flashes, too, of near-classic humor—the story, for example, of how Curley, snubbed by the

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Massachusetts Democrats, got himself into the 1932 nominating convention as Puerto Rican delegate "Jaime Miguel Curleo," and returned to Boston to begin his first address with the words "Señores and señoras."

Like the Bedouin chief in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Curley sees himself as the central figure in a deathless epic, and is so moved by the spectacle that tears come into his eyes, and he speaks of himself in the third person. *I'd Do It Again*, however, is no epic; it is a scenario for a bad film ("The Jim Curley Story") in which the hero (played by himself) indulges in a rather laborious monologue, cataloguing his virtues, reciting his exploits, laughing at his own jokes. The tone is by turns pontifical ("This book—the first authorized and only authentic account of my life . . . "), lofty ("The Curley record is eloquent proof that I was at every stage of my career the champion of the oppressed and the underprivileged"), modest ("I was not always the silver-tongued orator"), coy ("I had thought of calling this book *Saint And Sinner*, since I feel the label fits me pretty well"), sacrilegeous ("It would have been a simple matter to have followed the primrose rather than the thorny path . . . crowns of roses fade, crowns of thorns endure; Calvarys and crucifixions are remembered longest"), hard-boiled ("I knocked him out cold with one punch. . . . I gave him a wicked uppercut, and he executed a clumsy back-flip"), self-pitying ("I have known many lonely years"), self-righteous ("I never had any use for the 'winos' "), fiscal ("It was when I was out of office that the Boston tax-rate shot up"), philanthropic ("I have always been interested in politics, and it is this interest in politics which has given me the opportunity to perhaps bring a little more sunshine into the hearts of others"), and so on.

To VARY the proceedings, our hero quotes from his collection of press clippings about himself: "Is he not a perfect double for those pictures of stern old Caesar in the school books? Power is stamped undeniably upon him. Curley belongs to the imperial race." (Boston *Post*). "James Michael Curley is one of the greatest orators in the nation's history" (Harry Truman). "A most charming rogue and rascal" (Admiral Morton Deyo). "Curley does more Christian acts in one day than his detractors do in years" (Massachusetts Governor Eugene Foss). Of these "Christian acts" Curley recounts an endless list: the overcoat given to the shivering newsy, the Christmas doll given to the little blind girl, the basket of food to the starving family, the civil service exam taken for the illiterate friend, the champagne and orchids for Gold Star Mothers, the ten-dollar bills given to flood victims, the roses bought secretly for the poor little boy to give his mother on Mother's Day, and all the rest of it.

BECAUSE we know that Curley could be genuinely funny, and because political history demonstrates the effectiveness of his eloquence, the reader may be led to wonder whether the Governor has really done himself justice in these pages. Most of the humor cited is pointless, coarse or elephantine—as for example, when Curley tells, with obvious relish, how he once stood up during a performance of *Richard III* and shouted: "Richard, you are a son-of-a-bitch." Or how, after he had been elected mayor for the fourth time, in 1946

> . . . When the judge who swore me in asked me to repeat the words "according to the best of my ability" I responded "according to the best of my ability — and understanding" while winking broadly at the audience. I was gratified when they roared their approval.

As for the Curley oratory, what we glimpse of it here is florid, superficial, sentimental, even absurd — but then there is no doubt that Curley usually sounded better than he looked in print.

Curley boasts, too, of the campaign tactics which he has used in what he repeatedly refers to as "the great game of politics," where "epithets are not to be taken too seriously." Curley himself took them seriously, however; the pages bristle with indignation as he speaks of the "dirty politics," "shameless deceptions," and "insidious whispering campaigns" of his opponents. Yet Curley himself, by his own testimony, systematically wrecked the reputation of his political opponents by any means available, scattering unfounded accusations like buckshot. During the 1921 mayoralty campaign against John R. Murphy, a Catholic—"whose religious life, as far as I know" (admits Curley) "was above suspicion" — Curley repeatedly proclaimed that Murphy had left the Church, and that he ate meat on Friday

> . . . while my camp followers embarrassed him further, launching a playful propaganda campaign. Masquerading as laborers in the Lord's vineyard,

Sixth September

THEN what are they coming to take me to?
To school, my child, to school.
And you'll go with me, won't you Father?
No, my child, I have classes.
What are they going to do to me there?
To teach you; don't be a fool.
Do they do it with glasses and handkerchiefs Father?
My child, my child, I have classes.
Do they do it with gloves, do they do it with fingers?
I have classes, don't be a fool.

What will they come to get me in?
The bus will be here at nine.
Father, how do you pay on the bus?
You don't. There's a very nice man.
How do you ring the buzzer, Father?
The buzzer? What buzzer? No buzzer.
What if they're all jammed up in the aisle . . .
Look, you'll go down with Mother.
And stand on the corner. And do what they tell you.
The man is a very nice man.

GEORGE STARBUCK

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and carrying prayer-books, they walked around Charlestown and elsewhere informing groups what a disgrace it was that John R. Murphy had renounced his Catholic faith and joined a Masonic order. It was also bruited about that he intended to divorce his good wife, and marry a sixteen year-old girl.

Two decades later, the same fundamental technique was used by Curley in the 1942 Congressional race against Thomas Eliot; Curley sent postcards to all the households in the district, reading: "The issue is simple—it is either Eliot and Communism, or Curley and Americanism—take your choice." Curley, a Catholic, chuckles over and boasts of these apparent infractions of the Eighth Commandment with the same naiveté as he brags how—after Mussolini's march on Rome—he sent Il Duce the flag of Boston. Other politicians have used campaign tactics as ruthless as Curley's; other mayors with Italian constituencies may have sent similar flags in 1922. But only Curley is boasting about it in 1957.

The shocked editors of the Harvard *Crimson* once likened him to Hitler; John Barrymore would have been a better choice. Curley needed, at all times, a soap-box, an audience (preferably the Boston Irish), and a limited arena (beyond the level of city politics, he was hopelessly outclassed). He had no profound political ideology except to win the next election. It was this craving for the spotlight which marked Charley off from colder and doubtless more efficient city bosses; but it also won for him a great deal of affection which has more or less crystallized in something called "the Curley legend." It is apparently this same longing for attention which has caused him to write a book which must certainly evoke distaste even among those who—possibly conditioned by Edwin O'Connor's sentimental novel, *The Last Hurrah* — might have been inclined to think of Curley as another Frank Skeffington. He is hardly that; in an election campaign against Curley in his prime, Skeffington—a nice guy—would be, politically speaking, disembowelled.

There is in Curley's story, boastfulness and extraordinary egocentrism; but, not altogether surprisingly, there is pathos, too. Pathos in the bewildered bitterness of the purple note which Curley sent to Roosevelt as he saw his dreams of the Italian ambassadorship go glimmering.

There is pathos in Curley's grotesque inability to resist get-rich-quick schemes, pathos in his refusal to admit that the old days were gone and he no longer owned the Boston Irish, in his insistence on running again and again—in '49, '51 and '55—and being beaten again and again, like a punch-drunk fighter. And there is crowning pathos in this clumsy, anticlimactic effort to tell the cherished story of his life. Its only value is that it provides a necessary corrective to a lot of sentimental nonsense about old-fashioned Irish-American politicians; otherwise, it is of dubious value either as a memoir or as a political testament.

No Kin to American Radicalism

by E. V. Walter

SOONER or later, any discussion of American Communism raises the question of what the Party "is," and the assumption that it possesses a fixed "nature" has provoked lively efforts—inside the Party and out—to define it. The eye of the beholder determines the results, of course; the Party is everything from the receptacle of Total Evil to the Wave of the Future, and books about it range from demonologies and manuals of exorcism to martyrologies and apologetics. To avoid some serious pitfalls, the question of the "nature" of the CP must give way to the problem of how the Party may be understood. One way of understanding is to examine its history, for as Draper suggests, "the essential character of the movement was shaped at the beginning. . . ."

The Roots of American Communism, by Theodore Draper (Viking; $6.75).

He traces the emergence of the CP

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from the vicissitudes of the historic left-wing (that unsettled amalgam of syndicalism and socialism) and argues that the conflicts and disputes it inherited from this source—"the battle of immediate demands versus the ultimate goal," political action or direct action, acceptance or rejection of trade unionism, sectarian purity or opportunism and maneuver, legality or illegality, economic class struggle or parliamentarianism, control by native members or by immigrants, etc.—inclined the Party to seek the Comintern as its judge and master.

Internal problems quite insoluble at home could be solved in Moscow, and besides, from the Comintern the American Party could get international prestige and the reflected glory of the Russian Revolution as well as subsidies and technical assistance. Draper concludes that the CP "was transformed from a new expression of American radicalism to the American appendage of a Russian revolutionary power. Nothing else so important ever happened to it again."

After the illusion of imminent world revolution collapsed, the American CP chose to be "opportunistic" and, urged by Moscow, sought mass support, bringing forth its first major change of line —from sectarian isolation to the united front. "The first change of line," Draper argues, "was every other change of line in embryo. A rhythmic rotation from Communist sectarianism to Americanized opportunism was set in motion at the outset and has been going on ever since. . . ."

DRAPER rides his thesis too hard. There is more than a hint in his pages that he sets up the first change of line as a paradigm for all the changes that were to follow and that he views the subsequent shifts as little more than cyclical re-enactments of the primordial years. One hopes that before his second volume appears, he will examine this cyclical interpretation critically.

The problem of later Communism—historically different from that of the early years and therefore not merely a re-enactment—is precisely what to do about Moscow's errors. Draper argues that "Americanized" Communism has always been a response to a Russian stimulus and "has corresponded to the fluctuations of Russian policy; it has not obeyed a compelling need within the American Communists themselves." I agree that the American Communist movement has generally been an obedient servant to Moscow, but the error of Draper's interpretation of that obedience may be detected by examining the present form of "Americanized" Communism — after Khrushchev's revelations and after the suppression of the Hungarian revolution. It does obey "a compelling need within the American Communists themselves"—the need to disassociate themselves from the inhuman acts of the Russians. In the formative years, the Comintern offered "reflected glory"; afterwards it brought reflected guilt.

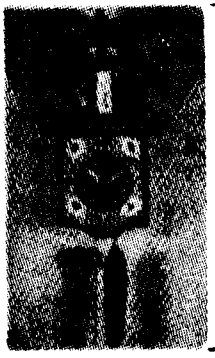
The Roots of American Communism makes it clear that the factional storm which today rends the Party does not spring full-blown from the death of Stalin but is actually older than the Party itself. The book (apart from its merit as a contribution to historical scholarship) is a fascinating case study of factional strife. It takes us into the lost world of radical politics—a world governed by a fissiparous demon reigning in the midst of split factions and fractured splinters. Draper gives us only a dim picture of this demon and does not engage it, considering it to be nothing more than a debilitating force which weakened the CP, rendered it ineffectual and drove it into the arms of Moscow.

However, in all radical movements, the fissiparous demon is (like Mephisto, the spirit of denial) both an evil and a source of vitality. It is no accident that when the wounds of demonic fission are healed by artificial unity imposed from without, a radical movement loses its sap.

DESPITE some analytic defects, Draper's book is a happy union of journalism and historical writing and is destined to be a standard reference work. Communism is such a natural target for all kinds of normal and abnormal rage and anxiety that special credit is due the Fund for the Republic and Clinton Rossiter, the general editor of the "Communism in American Life" series, for providing the support and the conditions for sane and lucid writing. The book is a welcome relief from the official publications by the captive theorists of Beadledom, and it does not obscure the fact that American society in the last century and in the first two decades of this one generated a need which the CP unsuccessfully tried to fill. The early Communists were men and women discontented with the conditions of their lives and with the contemporary illusions. Many of them sought the Party for "realism" and as a force that would bring them close to life, but the inner dynamic of the Party moved them even further in mind and spirit from the very conditions they were determined to master. The remoteness of the Party from American life is one important reason for the intensity with which it is hated and feared—it stands out starkly not as a native radical movement but as a foreign invader.

Notes on Contributors

MICHAEL MILLGATE is a young British critic who has recently returned to England after a long stay in the US. GEORGE STARBUCK is an editor of *The Chicago Review*; a young poet, his work has already appeared in most leading American journals, as well as in anthologies. PAUL TREMAINE is an Irish-American sociologist. E. V. WALTER is on the faculty of Ohio Wesleyan University. PHILIP ROTH is a member of the English faculty at the University of Chicago.



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MUSIC

Bernstein's "Romeo and Juliet"

WEST SIDE STORY, a loud new musical which will open in New York on September 26, is playing to sold-out houses on its three-week trial run in Washington, D. C. It was Jerome Robbins' idea to base the show on a modern-dress adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet,* and it was Arthur Laurents' thankless job to make the adaptation. What Laurents did was to substitute a couple of teenage gangs for the Montagues and Capulets and then let them fight it out. Laurents' plot follows Shakespeare's like a bloodhound, and without the music and dancing to bolster up, it would collapse in a hurry. Luckily, it doesn't have to walk on its own shaky legs. Instead, it dances on Jerome Robbins'. This is a dancer's show from start to finish, and the visual spectacle—not only in Robbins' gorgeous choreography but also in Oliver Smith's truly distinguished sets—is a treat to the eye.

Leonard Bernstein's score is, of course, a considerable cut above Broadway's norm. In a field where music is big business and where even Richard Rodgers and other famous tunesmiths farm chunks of their scores out to ghost-writers, invasion by a real composer ought to be a cause for some embarrassment. And Bernstein is, of course, a composer in the traditional sense. His technique is enormous—probably inexhaustible. While this does not mean that he can write the world's best show tunes (Richard Rodgers' are frequently more memorable than Bernstein's), it does mean that he can sustain a level of technical excellence that his closest Broadway competitors can't touch. It's obvious that Bernstein has a great flare for this kind of music, and that he writes it with a view to making some money. But the labor that he puts into a score like *West Side Story* is far greater than public demand requires, and shows that he is very serious about solving the technical problems he poses himself.

I suspect that one of the things Bernstein brings to such a score is his missionary zeal; for, don't forget, Bernstein is the man who spoon-fed Bach and atonality to the television audiences. Music is a cause for him, and it would be like him to use a medium as unpretentious as the musical as a means of popularizing the abstruse technical tricks of modern composition, much as C. S. Lewis uses science fiction as a vehicle for austere theological dogma. Bernstein's scores are alive with such devices.

A typical example is an engaging little patter-song in *West Side Story* called "America." Here, two girls talk about how nice it would be to be home in Puerto Rico, while their friends reply with scurrilous rhymes about what a dreadful place Puerto Rico is ("always the hurricanes blowing, always the population growing") and what a delight it is to be in New York. Now, the music sounds effortless enough; but it happens to be based on an elaborate metrical notion wherein a number of bars of equal lengths are, by mathematical redistribution, made to contain different numbers of beats. This is the metrical concept behind the Fugue in Roy Harris' *Third Symphony,* and it is by no means uncommon in serious modern music; but it is surely not something you would expect to find in a Broadway show. And in *West Side Story,* almost every musical number conceals some *tour de force* like this one, in which an elaborate technical device is served up in an easily-assimilated musical comedy style.

AS A MUSICAL John the Baptist Bernstein is a much better missionary to the New Yorkers than Menotti was. In his Broadway shows, it seemed to me that Menotti's concern was to show that Grand Opera, in English, was no sillier than musical comedy. Perhaps it isn't; but since Menotti forgot to put any good tunes in his shows, the only sensible conclusion one could reach was that musical comedy was one up on opera. Menotti's only claim to being a modern composer was his insistent employment of recitative—a device which the Italians have considered modern since 1892, at which time Bernard Shaw complained about it. Bernstein, on the other hand, is modern in every respect except style; and when he starts laying on coloristic dissonance with a paintbrush, he gets close to the sounds he uses in his concert music.

I can't imagine that he is going to convert anybody to Stravinsky and Bartok by *West Side Story*—anymore than he's going to make converts to musical comedy. Taste is taste and converts are hard to make.

IT IS to Mr. Bernstein's special credit in this score that he has handled the passages of low and coarse humor quite shamelessly, and thus managed to make it really funny; and that his handling of jazz materials is so unembarrassed that it sounds like the real hot, low jazz that jazz experts consider outside the province of written composition. He has also done a remarkable job of adjusting the singing to the requirements of the dancers, so that nobody has to sing while he is out of breath.

After the Washington opening, it was agreed that the dancing was superb, and that one featured singer, Chita Rivera, was very good indeed. Paul Hume, of the *Washington Post and Times-Herald,* generously remarked that it was easier to make singers out of dancers than to reverse the process; and this is a round about way of saying that, if the level of singing isn't very high here, it doesn't much matter. It's a fetching performance.

ROBERT EVETT

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TELEVISION

The Hurdles of Satire

IT IS WELCOME news that Sid Caesar may once again be teamed up with Imogene Coca. Caesar's worst moments this last year seem to have been when he had to share the screen with Miss Janet Blair, whose comic style was a rather frantic caricature of Caesar himself; Miss Coca, I remember, was able to express harassment without quite the air-flailing and word-sputtering. Too, Miss Coca's return could mean the end of "The Commuter" routines in which Miss Blair and Caesar tried to pump life into the old vaudeville belief that there is something uproariously funny about a husband and wife when they don't love every cubic inch of each other. Rarely, if ever, did the Caesar-Blair home resemble the suburbia that David Riesman, William H. Whyte, *et al.* tell us is there. It would in fact be what Sullivan calls "a television first" if Miss Coca and Caesar retained "The Commuter" idea and then went ahead to rake suburban life over the barbecue coals. This, of course, would be satire, and though Miss Coca and Caesar are, I think, at their best as satirists, I wonder if they would risk it.

The first hurdle for any TV satirist would seem to be the amount of sophistication which satire demands of the audience. As Gore Vidal recently wrote in *The Reporter*, "The audience must be aware of the thing satirized" and "unfortunately . . . the American mass audience possesses very little general information on any subject." Mr. Vidal is correct in assuming that if, say, Caesar's audience of last season had not been familiar with *Inherit the Wind* they would have missed the point of his witty parody of the play; so too with *Streetcar Named Desire* or *Bicycle Thief*. But he is mistaken, I think, when he assumes that a mass audience —the TV audience in particular—has "little general information on *any* subject."

Certainly, last season, when Caesar parodied *Omnibus*, Mike Wallace, *What's My Line?* not only did his audience recognize immediately the thing satirized, but some may even have seen Mr. Wallace's face in their most urgent dreams. This would make it seem that *the* subject the satirist can depend upon his television audience to know is television itself. Yet—and here is the bloodiest hurdle of them all—I would conjecture that a mass audience able to recognize a television program being spoofed would, more often than not, be so committed—or addicted—to the program so as not to want to see it spoofed.

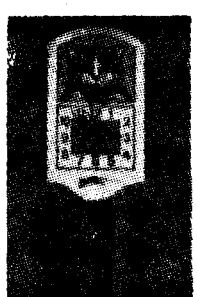
Take, for example, the fine parody Caesar did of *What's My Line?* What could it have meant to someone who *believes* in John Daly? And I take it that there are such devotees, and that a program such as *What's My Line?* with its mixture of urbane snobbery and democratic good-will ("isn't that a riot, he *works* in a sewer, nice fellow"), evokes from its faithful viewers what amounts to belief in the infallible respectability and intellectuality of its panelists. Woe unto the satirist, then, who passes judgment, for he is apt to find the bulk of his viewers divided into two groups: the unamused, who recognize the subject but don't get the point of it; and, what is more expensive to the comic's sponsor, the people who get offended.

This is not to say that one cannot criticize or be mean on TV and get away with it. There are several TV comics who pass judgment on each other quite frequently: Steve Allen mimics Ed Sullivan, Jerry Lewis insults publicly his ex-partner Dean Martin. All this, however, is to be taken as part of the comic's mask—Jack Benny and Fred Allen had theirs—and is more allied to the fraternal kidding of lady wrestlers than the kind of sustained satire which Caesar sometimes produced, irreverent, critical, and comic. Even when the feuds are serious the issues at stake are never social but egocentrically private. And too, we all know from *TV Guide* that Ed and Steve, for all their feuding, are really good guys.

These, then, are TV "personalities" and it is all right to throw stones, little ones, if you are in the club. It is a club in which Mr. Caesar has never, to his credit, sought membership. Generally he has existed within the body of his material, and has not engaged in swapping compliments with guest stars, chatting with his audience, or even emerging from the curtain after an energetic routine and sucking air to convince the audience that even if he wasn't funny he'd at least worked like hell at it. Caesar *is* his material, and if TV satire is dangerous, it is even more so for him because one feels of his satire that he believes in it: one can hardly imagine him coming out after the *What's My Line?* parody, and saying, as I think Mr. Lewis or Mr. Allen might, "John Daly is really doing a great great job over there, and so is the rest of the gang, all great great human beings, etc. . . . "

THESE random observations are all by way of saying that Miss Coca and Caesar, if they decide to play to a mass audience (as they surely will) won't hire Mr. Riesman or any of his colleagues from The Center for Studies in Leisure to write "The Commuter" scripts. And that is too bad, for the true subjects of satire for a mass audience are the things that contribute to its massness, advertising, the movie and TV heroes, the newspapers—in short, the mass media. For it isn't, as Mr. Vidal suggests, that the American mass audience is without shared knowledge; to the contrary, never before has one audience been forced to possess so *much* general information in common. That, after all, is the trouble.

PHILIP ROTH



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Correspondence

(*Continued from page 3*)

a very old movie; and the fault may be the splicer's, not Miss Winn's.

JAMES F. HOYLE

Princeton, N. J.

► *What Johnny Don't Know*

SIRS:

DR. NORMAN and Professor Sawin have performed a useful service in bringing before your readers a demonstration of "What Johnny Don't Know" (*NR*, Aug. 12).

I have no doubt that some readers will object to the article because the sampling is not sufficiently complete. They will point out that the experiment was confined to a minority of the first and second year students at one public university, and one in the South at that. If it were possible to give the Norman-Sawin quiz to all freshmen and sophomores in all colleges and universities in the country, the score would probably be higher, but not high enough to give one comfort.

The lack of interest of most college students in public affairs and their indifference to the arts and literature are certainly disturbing. The situation is even alarming when one realizes that college students, despite their ignorance, are by and large superior in intelligence and learning to the rest of the population. Considering that the college group will provide most of the leaders of the next generation, something might even be some to solve the problem.

Perhaps the educators of the nation might re-examine their current philosophy. The fact that so many high school graduates are ignorant and illiterate is, perhaps, an indictment of the theory that education should be geared to the level of the mediocre student.

Perhaps the college and university administrators, who are already dreading the imminent flood of students, might consider the problem. Certainly the students who wrote the themes included by Professor Sawin will not stay in college long, probably not even a semester. But as long as they are there, they are interfering with the education of 22 percent who could identify half of the persons on the list.

Since this article makes clear, as no amount of generalizing will, the problem facing American schools and colleges, the editors of *The New Republic* are to be congratulated for publishing it as are the authors for writing it.

ARTHUR N. WILKINS

Kansas City, Mo.

► *Biased, Slanted, Stupid*

SIRS:

JUST having finished my copy of *The New Republic* for this week (August 26), I am compelled to get my feelings off my chest. The whole issue is worthless. . . . People who subscribe to what they believe are *Liberal* magazines and then have [such] articles thrown at them as "The Chinese Intellectuals," are insulted, yes, brainwashed. I have never read an article by Robert Guillain that was not biased, slanted and stupid. . . . The rest of the articles in the August 26 number are some more of the same kind. I usually hand my issues on to others; this goes in the incinerator.

LILLIAN M. FARLEY

Glendale, California

► *The Noises of Silence*

SIRS:

MR. FLINT's letter (*NR*, August 26) comparing Donald Malcolm's "love of literature" unfavorably with Leslie Fiedler's draws me to Mr. Malcolm's defense. I don't quite know how one demonstrates a love of literature—perhaps Mr. Flint has access to Fiedler papers not available to the public. Obviously such comparisons will get us nowhere. It seems more relevant to remark that Mr. Malcolm's criticism was reasonable, well-documented and just.

For my money (and I'm a paid subscriber) Malcolm is producing better writing at 25 than his above mentioned elder, and that indicates a sensitivity, insight and skill (if not a love of literature) deserving some respect. I too am 25 and I don't think it's such a damned quiet generation.

DAVID RAY

Chicago, Ill.

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Sagittarius

SAGITTARIUS, known on both sides of the Atlantic as *the* satirical versifier on public affairs in the English language, will now appear regularly in this country for the first time—exclusively in *The New Republic*. In addition to verse written for this journal, SAGITTARIUS, who was until recently a feature of *The New Statesman and Nation*, will continue to appear in *The Manchester Guardian*, from which the sample below is taken.

NEVERMORE

Tapping Telephones is customary in USA
—News item

Once when strokes of midnight sounded,
By the sleeping world surrounded,
To the telephone I bounded
(Having locked my chamber door).
Once with no one prying, peering,
Confidences overhearing,
What a flood of words endearing
From my lips each night would pour,
When I phoned the fair Lenore! . . .

"Go!" I shriek, "accurst eavesdropper!
Stop, ungentlemanly copper!
Cease this tampering improper,
Such intrusion I deplore!
Smash those instruments demonic,
Those transmitters electronic
Made for snooping telephonic,
Horrors never known before!"
Silence then, and nothing more. . . .

Sagittarius in THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN *(June 15)*

SAGITTARIUS is another reason why you may wish to plan now to include one or more *New Republic* gift subscriptions on your 1957 Christmas gift list

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